

INFORMATION REPORT

CONFIDENTIAL

COUNTRY China  
SUBJECT Bristle Trade

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ACQUIRED

DATE OF INFO. See below

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SUPPLEMENT TO  
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1. Before 7 December 1941 the Tsingtao bristle trade to foreign ports was very large. Both European and American markets received quality cargo originating at Weihsien, about one hundred miles west of Tsingtao. The gross cargo was brought to Weihsien and dressed to lengths before being shipped to Tsingtao for export packing.
2. Since the end of World War II some trading has been done from Tsingtao, mainly to the American market via New York. Shipments have been sporadic, reflecting the condition of the illicit traffic between Weihsien and Tsingtao.
3. During the past eight months since Weihsien fell to the Communists, the gross cargo has been brought out by devious methods and routes and the bristles have been dressed in Tsingtao.
4. After Tientsin fell and regular ship contact was established with Hong Kong, exporters sent all of their bristles out of Tientsin for export to the world markets via Hong Kong. This prompted the Communist authorities to make bristles a government monopoly, and at present export permits for bristles are not granted to private firms at Tientsin.
5. During the first half of April Communist trade representatives arrived in Weihsien from Tientsin expressly to purchase all dressed bristles.
6. The Weihsien dealers were not required to sell their cargo, but they were told that they would not be granted permission to export it abroad or move it overland to Tsingtao.
7. The prices quoted to the Weihsien dealers were ridiculously low, and if the quality of the bristles was suspected to be below standard, the cargo was taken on consignment only, with a promise to pay after its sale abroad.
8. This move caused the dealers to stop dressing bristles. In turn, the Communist representatives ordered the dressing sheds opened. They require the workmen to work ten hours a day for meagre wages and food consisting of corn gruel\*.

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CLASSIFICATION

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9. Weih sien bristles bought or taken on consignment are sent to Tientsin or Chefoo for shipment to Hong Kong. British and Norwegian ships are making regular calls at these and North Korean ports, carrying native produce on the outward trip and imports from abroad on the trip in\*\*.
10. The Communist trade representatives have not shown an interest in any cargo other than bristles. For example, hairnets still move freely from Weih sien to Tsingtao, on the condition that specified items are brought back. The hairnets, which are mainly bartered for medium-grade tea, are moved to Tsingtao on a Communist permit which is free of charge.

This information was acquired [REDACTED]

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- \* [REDACTED] Comment. Dressers working in Tsingtao, on the other hand, demand the best food made of imported flour, and constantly bicker for increases in wages.

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- \*\* [REDACTED] Comment. A member of the Nationalist Legislative Yuan from Shantung has stated that numerous ships from Hong Kong were loading native produce at Shihtao, at the southeastern tip of the Shantung Peninsula.

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